

CHAPTER 45
HOUSING ASSESSMENT AND
ACTION PLANNING PROGRAM

261—45.1(76GA,HF512) Purpose. The purpose of this program is to provide grants to (1) individual communities, counties, or neighborhoods; or (2) clusters of communities, to conduct a housing needs assessment and complete a housing action plan.

261—45.2(76GA,HF512) Eligible applicants. Iowa cities, counties or councils of governments may apply for the program.

261—45.3(76GA,HF512) Population guidelines. A nonurban city or county may apply for the program. An urban city may apply on behalf of a neighborhood. If the unit of general local government has a population under 25,000, the neighborhood may, but need not, encompass the entire area of a unit of general local government.

261—45.4(76GA,HF512) Definitions. When used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

“*Department*” means the Iowa department of economic development.

“*Neighborhood*” means a geographic location designated in comprehensive plans, ordinances, or other local documents as a neighborhood, village, or similar geographical designation that is within the boundary but does not encompass the entire area of a unit of general local government.

“*University assessment team*” means Iowa State University, institute for design research and outreach, which is under contract to the department to provide communities with housing technical assistance under the department’s direction.

“*Urban*” means Des Moines, Sioux City, Council Bluffs, Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Iowa City, and Davenport.

261—45.5(76GA,HF512) Project awards. An applicant may receive an award of up to \$2,500 per community or neighborhood (with a cap of \$10,000 per multicomunity award) to complete a study and action plan.

261—45.6(76GA,HF512) Eligible and ineligible expenditures of grant funds.

45.6(1) *Eligible expenditures of grant funds.* Expenses eligible for reimbursement under the program include:

a. Fees to be paid to a private consultant to conduct and complete the housing needs assessment (including surveys) and action plan for the defined area. The consultant name, address, biography, and fee schedule must be included in the application.

b. Fees to be paid to a council of governments to complete the housing needs assessment (including surveys) and action plan for the defined area.

c. Fees to be paid to a university assessment team under contract by the department to complete the housing needs assessment (including surveys) and action plan for the defined area.

45.6(2) *Ineligible expenditures of grant funds.* Expenses ineligible for reimbursement under the program include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. The purchase of office equipment or office rental.

b. Meeting expenses (e.g., room rental).

c. Application preparation.

d. Administrative costs.

e. Completed assessments.

261—45.7(76GA,HF512) Match requirements of applicants, eligible and ineligible expenditures of match funds.

45.7(1) *Match requirements of applicants.* The level of minimum local match required varies by the type of assessment proposed. A minimum of 10 percent local cash match is required to support a request for a comprehensive needs assessment. A minimum of 50 percent local cash match is required to support a request for a targeted needs assessment.

45.7(2) *Match sources.* The applicant must have all match documented in the application. Sources of match could include, but are not limited to, a city or county financial pledge, cash match from local economic development groups, local industry, utility companies, or a group of private investors.

45.7(3) *Eligible expenditures of match funds.* Local match may be used to subsidize eligible expenses detailed as eligible uses of funds, report printing, or to establish a local fund to implement identified housing initiatives.

45.7(4) *Ineligible expenditures of match funds.* The payment of salaries or an hourly wage to local city, economic development, or chamber staff will not be accepted as a cash match.

261—45.8(76GA,HF512) General guidelines for applications.

45.8(1) Local housing task force. A local housing task force (with representation from each community to be studied) must be in place and documented in the application. Responsibilities of the housing task force include determining the need for a housing needs assessment, assisting as needed in the assessment process, participating in action planning, and facilitating project implementation.

45.8(2) Required components of an assessment and action program. The applicant may apply for funds to:

- a. Complete and implement a comprehensive housing needs assessment plan.
- b. Complete a targeted housing needs assessment if a recent (less than two years old) comprehensive housing needs assessment has already been completed in the study area.

45.8(3) The applicant may not apply for both fund types (comprehensive and targeted) in the same application.

45.8(4) The components of the proposed assessment (comprehensive or targeted) must include, but not be limited to:

- a. Documenting the current inventory of housing in the housing study area—approximate values, conditions, types, and availability.
- b. Information on the labor needs of area employers and corresponding wage levels (modified for targeted assessment component); infrastructure constraints; land availability; barriers to finance; local contractor and developer capacity; and construction, land, and infrastructure development costs.
- c. Projections of future housing demand segmented by demographic groups.
- d. An action plan, matching identified needs with available state, federal, and local resources.
- e. The local capacity to implement said plan.

45.8(5) Letters of endorsement.

- a. Applications shall include a letter from the housing task force(s) involved in the study area detailing the organizational structure of the task force, a willingness to participate in the housing needs assessment process and action planning, and any initiatives that have been undertaken to date. A listing of task force members, with corresponding addresses and affiliations, shall be included in the letter(s).

- b. Applications shall include a letter from each city council included in the study area supporting the proposal and stating a willingness to work with the task force on assessment and implementation plans.

- c. Applications shall include a letter from all sources of matching funds documenting the availability of such funds.

d. Applications shall include a letter of cooperation from any source pledging technical assistance or services to the project (excluding the university assessment team). If council of governments (COG) services will be purchased, include a letter from the director of the COG stating the staff assignment, agreement with the proposed timetable or fee structure, for example, to the project.

e. Consultant only: Attach a letter from the consultant stating name, address, biography, references, an outline of the assessment process to be used, and a fee schedule for the proposed project.

45.8(6) Timetable. Applications shall specify a timetable to complete the assessment and action planning phases of the project.

45.8(7) The department shall disseminate an initial request for proposal to appropriate entities. Requests for proposals from eligible applicants will be accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the year as long as funds are available.

45.8(8) Applicant submission. Applications shall be submitted to the Rural Development Project Manager, Iowa Department of Economic Development, 200 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50309. Application forms and instructions are available at this address.

45.8(9) Application contents. Required contents of the application include:

a. A brief statement of existing needs, issues, and capacities in the area that creates a potential for future housing initiatives.

b. Timetable and budget.

c. A summary sheet containing applicant name, project contact person, project type, funding request, task force committee members, communities served by the proposal, estimate of the population of the affected area, and technical assistance information.

d. A description of the cash match the applicant will pledge to the program.

e. Letters of endorsement as specified in subrule 45.8(5).

f. An executive summary of any housing planning documents previously completed for the proposed area (within two years) if available.

261—45.9(76GA,HF512) Review and award process.

45.9(1) *Review committee.* Each eligible application shall be reviewed by a committee made up of three representatives of the department. Applicants scoring fewer than 300 points under subrule 45.9(2) shall not be recommended for funding. Applicants may be interviewed further to gain additional information about the proposal or to negotiate the proposed plan of work. Recommendations of the committee will be forwarded to the director of the department for final decisions.

45.9(2) *Scoring.* The scoring system has a maximum of 500 points.

a. Needs, issues, and capacities in the area that create a potential for future housing initiatives—200 points.

b. Study and facilitation proposal—175 points.

c. Financial and volunteer resources allocated to the project—125 points.

261—45.10(76GA,HF512) Program management.

45.10(1) *Record keeping.* Financial records, supporting documents, statistical records and all other records pertinent to the project shall be retained by the recipient of funds for a period of three years after the contract expiration date.

45.10(2) *Contract.* A contract will be negotiated with successful applicants to define the terms for disbursement of funds and responsibilities.

45.10(3) *Access to records.* Representatives of the department and state auditor's office shall have access to all books, accounts and documents belonging to or in use by the recipient pertaining to the receipt of assistance under this program.

45.10(4) *Monitoring.* The department may perform any review or field inspections it deems necessary to ensure program compliance.

a. The applicant must make available to the department all records pertaining to all matters related to this program. Any costs determined by the department to be unallowable costs shall be repaid to the department.

b. Applicants will be required to submit a quarterly progress report to the department. The report will assess progress toward the goals of the program and the activities taking place within 24 months after the contract date. Measurable initiatives may include number of units rehabilitated, new construction (single and multifamily), infrastructure improvements related to housing development, marketing activities to attract home buyers or developers, and incentive packages assembled by communities. A copy of the task force's assessment and implementation plan shall be forwarded to the department upon completion. The department may perform field visits as deemed necessary.

These rules are intended to implement 1995 Iowa Acts, House File 512, section 1(3) "f."

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